THE

CHRISTIAN DUTY OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN.

A Discourse,

DELIVERED

IN THE CHURCH OF PRINCETON, NEW-JERSEY,

AUGUST 23, 1825,

BEFORE THE

Princeton Female Society,

FOR THE SUPPORT OF

A FEMALE SCHOOL IN INDIA.

BY ASHBEL GREEN, D. D.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

Princeton Press,

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Christian Women.

MARK XIV. 8. First part.

"*SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD.—*"

These words are found in the narrative of a very interesting incident in the life of our blessed Redeemer. Six days before the Jewish Passover at which he entered on his last sufferings, a supper, or festival entertainment, was made for him, at Bethany ; a village in the environs of Jerusalem, frequently mentioned in the evangelical history, and particularly memorable as the residence of Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. The supper was made at the house of one Simon, a leper : who, it is highly probable, had been cleansed by the miraculous power of Christ. Lazarus was a guest, at this entertainment, which some suppose was made, either wholly or in part, at his expense ; and his sisters, Martha and Mary, were both present. With her characteristick activity, Martha served at the supper-table ; and Mary with her wonted reverential love to her Lord and Redeemer, and animated, no doubt, with the liveliest gratitude for the interposition of his almighty power, in calling her beloved brother from the tomb, gave him on this occasion a signal expression of her sense of obligation, and of the high estimation in which she wished that others should hold him. She had made preparation for this expression of her gratitude and love,

by procuring an Alabaster box of the most costly and fragrant ointment, such as was then used about the persons of individuals the most distinguished by birth or office ; that with this she might anoint her benefactor, whom she also knew to be the long expected Messiah, the Prince of peace. His recumbent attitude, then always in use, at the supper table, was peculiarly favourable to her design. Approaching him in this reclining posture, she broke the box of liquid Nard, and poured it first on his head, and afterwards on his body and his feet. And then, while the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, this holy devoted woman kneeled at the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with the flowing tresses of her hair—Christian sisters —Are you not tempted to envy your sister Mary? To envy the opportunity she had to express in this striking and affecting manner, her humble, ardent attachment, to your common and adored Redeemer? Envy not but imitate her. Opportunities still occur to express love and gratitude to your unseen Saviour, by acts as acceptable to him as that of Mary was ; and which he will ere long, acknowledge and reward before the assembled universe.

Who would expect that any disciple of Christ *could* have disapproved of the testimonial of reverence and esteem, which he received from the sister of Lazarus. Who would not rather expect, that the whole company must have seen it with delight, and have applauded the happy ingenuity by which it had been devised, and the lovely enthusiasm—shall I not call it?—with which the device was executed. But it was not so. Judas was among the guests. He, it has commonly been believed, had been appointed the purse-bearer of the holy family, from his reputed integrity, care and capacity, in the management of pecuniary concerns. His opinion, therefore, on a point of economy, especially when that which might be saved, was to be given to the poor, would naturally have much

weight with his fellow apostles; knowing, too, as they well did, that their Master had never affected worldly honours, nor required any extraordinary expenditure, for his own gratification. They, therefore, joined in the murmuring, which began with Judas—not suspecting that he was hypocrite, thief and traitor all in one; and that he only wished that the "Three Hundred pence" (about fifty dollars of our money) for which "the ointment might have been sold," should have been added to the common stock, that he might carry off a richer prize, when he should abscond with the whole; which, it appears, he had, about this time determined to do—Not in the least suspecting any thing of all this, the other disciples were influenced by the suggestions of a base and wicked avarice, to join in the murmur, that there had been, on the part of Mary, a profligate waste of property, which might have been applied to a better purpose.

The whole of this murmuring, Christian friends, both in its origin and tendency, was in my apprehension exceedingly like the complaints which we have lately heard, from certain quarters, that much money is wasted—is wantonly and foolishly thrown away—in professed attempts to honour Christ by sending his gospel to the heathen and the Jews.

But the Saviour vindicated Mary, and reproved her calumniators. Her views of duty, dictated by her liberal spirit, and her warm and generous heart, were far more correct than their calculating and cold blooded reasonings on the subject. The Saviour reminded them, that every duty must have its proper time and place. The poor they would always have with them, and would never be without an opportunity to show them kindness, "but me, said he, ye have not always."—His departure from them was now just at hand, and whatever tokens of their regard he was to receive, must be speedily bestowed, or the oppor-

tunity for bestowing them would be past forever. It is not probable, indeed, that Mary, any more than the apostles, supposed that Christ, before the expiration of that very week, was to suffer the death of crucifixion. It was the ardour of her affectionate reverence for her Lord, which prompted her to do what she had done. But she had done what was right in itself; and the overruling providence of God had so ordered it, that this honourable anointing of the sacred person of the Messiah, should take place immediately before he was cut off—"She hath done, (said he) what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." As if he had said—"Others are about to insult and despise me, and to put me to an infamous and painful death; but she hath done what she could for my gratification, and to show me honour and respect; and let her not be blamed for this—The anointing of the dead is indeed attended with considerable expense. But would you grudge such an expense to my dead body? My enemies would not permit Mary to do what has occasioned this cost, after my decease; and God hath therefore put it into her heart to anoint me aforehand." Nor did the Saviour content himself, with simply justifying this noble and affectionate expression of Mary's attachment and devotedness. He went farther in his commendation of it than he ever went—so far as we are told—in approving any other act of kindness or respect that was shown to his person. He declared that wherever his Gospel should be preached in the whole world, and to the end of time, this deed of Mary should be told as an honourable memorial of her. Accordingly we find, in fact, that although the action is apparently not of the greatest importance, in the history of our Lord, and very many of his own acts, as St. John informs us, are not recorded at all, yet this deed of Mary is circumstantially narrated by three of the evangelists. And it is a delightful thought that after the lapse of near twenty centuries, and at the distance of half the cir-

cumference of the globe from the place where the prediction was uttered, I am this moment contributing my mite to its verification.

Do we not learn from all this, that when, from real and fervent love to Christ, we do what we can to serve and glorify him, he marks it with the most peculiar approbation, and will confer on it the most distinguished reward?

"She hath done what she could"—It seems to be a legitimate inference from these words, a general proposition which they will fairly support, that Christian women ought to do all that they can, to manifest their love to the Saviour and their desire to do him honour. For who will say that others ought not to do as Mary did? Few, it is believed, except avowed infidels, will deny the truth of this doctrine, when proposed in the abstract form in which it is here stated. Yet when we come to examine it in detail, and to apply it to practice, we find that opinion is by no means uniform, even among professing Christians.

We propose, therefore, in the sequel of this discourse, *to endeavour to ascertain and state, what Christian women may do; and what they may not do; in manifesting their love to Christ, and their desire to do him honour.*

It may be proper just to remark, in a preliminary way, that genuine love to Christ, and a rational desire to do him honour, will always manifest themselves in earnest endeavours to render the Redeemer precious in the estimation of others.—In using all proper means to propagate the knowledge of his glorious person, of his excellent doctrines, of his great salvation, of the obligations which sinners owe him, and of the absolute necessity of their embracing for themselves his offered mercy, as the only sure ground of their hope for eternity. It is by thus doing that we comply with our Lord's own directions on this subject. "Herein (said he) is my Father glorified that ye bear

much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples—If ye love me, keep my commandments—Feed my sheep, feed my lambs —In as much as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." Let it be remembered then, that our Saviour is identified with his religion ; and that to love, to promote, or to adorn the religion of Christ, is to express love to himself and to honour him before the world. Our representations and language, in the discussion before us, will be in conformity with this remark.

In prosecuting our purpose, as already stated, we may find it advantageous to consider—

I. The negative part of our subject, namely, what Christian women may not do, in manifesting their love to their Saviour, and their desire to do him honour.

It is plainly intimated in the text, that Mary's efforts to honour her Redeemer, were limited. When it is said, "she hath done what she could," the implication is obvious, that she would have done more if more had been in her power—if propriety would have permitted, or if means and opportunity had not been wanting. By what circumstances and considerations, then, were her efforts limited? *In the first place,* I answer. By the bounds prescribed to her by her sex itself. Happy is that woman who always finds that she *cannot* do, what it is improper for her to do *as a woman ;* whose whole mind and feelings are so set against whatever misbecomes her, that she experiences a fortunate incapacity to attempt it. The Saviour, to whom Christian women are to manifest their attachment, is their Creator and Lord. He framed them with that shrinking delicacy of temperament and feeling, which is one of their best distinctions, which renders them amiable, and which, while it unfits them for command, and subjects them, in a degree, to the rougher sex, gives them, at the same time, an appropriate and very powerful influence. It was, therefore, not to be expected, that he who formed

them with this natural and retiring modesty, and under a qualified subjection to man, would ever require, or even permit them, to do any thing in violation of his own order; and least of all that he would permit this in his own immediate service. Hence, I apprehend, it is, that we find in the New Testament such texts as the following. 1 Tim. ii. 11—14. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." —1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

The same apostle, who, under the unerring guidance of divine inspiration, delivered these plain and positive injunctions, has also said—1 Cor. xi. 5. "Every woman that prayeth, or prophesieth, with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven." Here, unquestionably, is a direction how women ought to appear and act, when speaking in a publick Christian assembly; for the connexion of the passage shows clearly that it is of such an assembly that the apostle is here treating. This, then, seems to militate with the preceding precepts. But we know that inspired truth never can contradict, or be inconsistent with itself. How then is this apparent inconsistency to be cleared up? In one way only, as we believe; and in that way, easily and perfectly. During the period of miraculous endowments under the Gospel dispensation, as well as under that of Moses, the gift of supernatural inspiration was sometimes conferred on women, as well as upon men. We are told

expressly, that Philip the Evangelist "had four daughters, virgins, that did prophesy." Now, in the last quoted passage, the apostle is speaking of women under supernatural inspiration; but in the other passages, of women under no such inspiration. It appears, therefore, that by a miraculous gift, the great head and lawgiver of the church took the case of the women on whom he bestowed that gift out of the general rule, and authorized them to utter, even in publick assemblies, what his own spirit dictated at the time. But on all other and ordinary occasions—to these our first quotations refer—they are absolutely required not to speak, but to keep silence in the churches. It is also worthy of special remark, that even when divinely authorized to speak, they were still commanded to be covered; as indicative of a delicate reserve, and as recognizing a state of subjection. The explanation here given, as it seems indispensable to the reconciling of one part of holy writ with another, so it will be found to be countenanced and warranted by the context of the passages we have recited. But as we assuredly believe, that miraculous inspiration has long since ceased in the Christian church, no such expected cases as those we have mentioned, can any longer occur. The general rule therefore laid down by the Spirit of Christ, speaking by the mouth of St. Paul, is now in force, without an exception. Women are, in no case, to be publick preachers and teachers, in assemblies promiscuously composed of the two sexes. This is explicitly and pointedly prohibited. Here, then, is one thing that Christian women may *not* do, in their endeavours to promote and extend the religion of Christ. And I am well assured, that in making the statement you have just heard, all that I have said accords as fully with the views, wishes and feelings, of that Society at whose request, and in whose behalf, I now speak, as it does with the spirit and injunctions of Sacred Scripture.

2. The endeavours of Christian women to promote and extend the religion of Christ, must be limited by a due regard to the means they may have at command, and the opportunities which may offer, for the purpose. This indeed is a rule of duty, which taken at large, is as applicable to men, as to women.—The efforts of all to do good, must be bounded by their means and opportunities. But there is a special application of the rule to the female sex, which ought to be distinctly noticed and carefully regarded. Their means of contributing both to publick and private charities, must frequently be derived from the other sex. What they give must come from the purses of their husbands, fathers, brothers, or other near kindred, or particular friends; and they certainly in all such cases ought to be consulted, and to determine on the amount of charity which, in any given instance, it is proper to bestow—unless indeed a general discretion has been previously allowed.

Sometimes, we know, the case is otherwise. In a number of instances, women have property of their own, entirely free from any foreign control; and then their duty, as to charitable donations, is clearly under no other restriction, than that which is common to them with men.

This seems to have been the case with her to whom our text refers. We are not, indeed, expressly told that such was the fact. But the circumstances which are narrated appear to me to indicate, that what she did was unlooked for by the whole company, except by him who knew all things.—That neither Lazarus nor Martha was acquainted with their sister's design, till it was executed. If this were so, the expensive purchase which Mary had made, must have been from her separate and independent part of the family estate; or from her own earnings. Be this as it might, it is an obvious duty for every Christian woman to submit to her relatives, implicitly, the disposition of their

own property ; after laying before them, as she lawfully may, the considerations and motives which influence her own mind, in favour of a contemplated charity.

I cannot, however, forbear to mention here, that it is a noble expression of Christian benevolence, which is now witnessed in various parts of our country, where pious and publick spirited females cheerfully sacrifice superfluous expense in dress or equipage ; and others as cheerfully labour with their own hands, in forming garments, or in making for sale to the rich, certain articles of taste or ornament ; and both classes put the proceeds of the whole into the treasury of the Lord, to extend in various ways, the inestimable blessings of his precious Gospel. These sacrifices and labours, when kept within any moderate bounds, are by no means to be considered as violations of female duty ;—and those who endeavour harshly to restrain them, or to discourage them by ridicule and banter, act a part, to which we give only its proper character, when we say that it is, at once, unmanly, base and wicked.

On the circumstance, that the opportunities which women have to do good, are more circumscribed than those of men, we only remark in general, that as we can easily see, that the propriety of what was done by her to whom the text relates, depended much, not only on the known character of the Saviour, but on what she did being done at the house of a friend, and in the presence of her own family and of many other witnesses ; so Christian women now, ought to be sensible, that they can seldom be required to expose their persons to insult, or their characters to unfavourable imputations, by any enterprises or errands of benevolence, or by any exertions to propagate the Gospel. I will not indeed say, that there may not be some extraordinary occasions, on which it may be their duty, to put both safety and reputation at considerable risk. But all such cases must be clearly and strongly marked. Duty,

in general, will consist, in submitting to the allotments of God's providence, in all the circumstances of our character and state ; and not in disregarding his order, by an indiscreet attempt to render services beyond the limits which he has prescribed.

Let us now consider, more directly,

II. What Christian women may properly do, as a manifestation of their love to their Saviour, or for the promotion or extension of his religion.

Here we might say at once, and in general, that women may and ought to do, in the service of their Saviour, whatever is not prohibited in the exceptions and restrictions that have been specified—That, with these exceptions and restrictions their moral and religious duties, are, in all respects, the same as those of men: and this is unquestionably the general truth, in regard to this subject, which ought to be remembered and acted on. But questions sometimes arise, as to what ought, and what ought not, to be considered as exceptions and restrictions: and it may also be of use a little to explain and inculcate, as well as to enumerate, female duties. We therefore proceed to state,

First, that, Christian women should be very sensible that the religion of their Saviour is greatly adorned, and sometimes directly promoted, by an exemplary discharge of all the customary duties of life ; and by sustaining all its relations in the most praise-worthy manner. It is creditable in a very high degree to evangelical piety, when the world itself is constrained to confess, that its professors are more exact and active in fulfilling all social and relative obligations, and are more amiable and exemplary in their whole deportment, than those who are destitute of religion. Perhaps it belongs to women to prove the truth of this observation, more frequently and strikingly than can be done by men. The apostle Peter says—"If any obey not the word, they may, without the word, be won by the conver-

sation of the wives, when they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." It should, therefore, never be forgotten, that Christian women ought practically to demonstrate, that the influence of their religion has rendered them better wives, better mothers, better daughters, better sisters, better neighbours, and better friends, than they would otherwise be; and more active, punctual, conscientious, and persevering, in the discharge of all the ordinary duties of life—That although they cannot sacrifice their allegiance to their Saviour to any worldly consideration whatsoever, yet only allow them to maintain that allegiance unimpaired, and you shall find them ready to make any other sacrifice to which they may be called.

2. It is one of the peculiar and most important duties of Christian women, to instruct and pray with children, and to endeavour to form their tender minds to piety, intelligence, and virtue. Here is a wide and fertile field for their appropriate labours, in the service and for the honour of their Redeemer. The earliest years of children are usually and necessarily past, almost wholly under female care; and it is much earlier than is commonly supposed, that their minds and moral feelings take a cast which is often as lasting as life. Of what inconceivable importance is it then, that this first moulding of the mind and heart should be favourably made; and that mothers should know and remember that if *so* made, it must commonly be made by them. They have the capacity of mingling, as it were, their own souls with the souls of their children—of breathing into them, with a maternal tenderness and sympathy, for which there can be no substitute, those sentiments of filial reverence for their Creator and Redeemer, and of veneration for all that is holy and lovely in the religion of the Gospel, which, under the Divine blessing, may become, and do often in fact become, the germs of early and vital godliness.

By pious mothers chiefly, must children be taught to use, and to use properly, those little forms of devotion, in which they may lisp their petitions and thanksgivings to God; and those hymns and spiritual songs, by which "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," the Saviour's praise is "perfected," and to become familiar with those Scripture narratives, with which nearly the whole of sacred story is connected, and by which the fundamental doctrines of revealed truth may be taught and inculcated. By the prayers of pious mothers, must their dear offspring be commended to the providential care and effectual grace of God, with that frequency and fervour, to which the most favourable answer may reasonably be expected, and to which such an answer has often, in fact, been most remarkably returned.

But I cannot pretend to detail all that pious and intelligent mothers may do—and what pious sisters, who will act a mother's part, may sometimes do—to train the infant mind to heavenly aspirings, and to the love of virtuous action. Point me to an instance of very early and eminent piety which might not be clearly traced to this source, and you will show me such an instance as my reading and observation hitherto have never furnished.

Nor does maternal influence, in favour of piety and virtue, terminate with the infant, or early years of children. A mother's influence is of the utmost consequence—very often it is greater than any other influence—through the whole of youth, and even to a more advanced age. The young man, or young woman, on whom the counsels, prayers, and tears of a pious mother have lost their commanding effect, has indeed reached the threshold of hopeless perdition.

I have spoken of early religion, but in reading the history of the church, both by inspired and uninspired penmen, it is worthy of remark, how often the matured and

eminent religion of the most distinguished men, and all their extensive usefulness has been plainly, and sometimes confessedly the fruit and product of a mother's goodness and care, early begun and long continued. Nor is this wonderful. Roman virtue and ambition, was often traceable to the same powerfully operative cause; and its effects in the production of modern sages and heroes, has sometimes been equally conspicuous. To the *nursery*, Christian friends—to the nursery, both the Church and the State must look, for their best support—for those who are destined to become their firmest pillars, and their brightest ornaments.

Allow the speaker to say, before leaving this part of his subject, that the leading ideas which have just been thrown out, were those which induced him to take the early and zealous part, which he has taken, in recommending the institution of such Societies, as that at whose instance he now addresses you.

The influence of the sex is, and ought to be, great, in ways almost innumerable. But their agency in first forming the minds and habits of children and youth is, and must be, nearly exclusive. Till the women of India, therefore, are raised from that state of ignorance and degradation in which they have been sunk for ages past, the diffusion of Christianity in that country cannot be general and lasting. To produce this effect, we must look for—at least till the time shall arrive when "a nation shall be born in a day"—a generation to arise, which well instructed Christian mothers shall have helped to form, and on which well informed Christian women shall exert all their natural and incalculable influence.

3. Christian women may show their love to the Saviour, and promote his cause, in a variety of instances, of a private nature, at which we can do little more than glance. They may devise, and suggest, and recommend schemes of

benevolence and piety, the execution of which must chiefly be left to men.—Having as deep an interest as the other sex, in the proper choice, settlement, and support of a minister of the Gospel, and in all the concerns of a Christian church and congregation, it is reasonable, that on these subjects their opinions and wishes should be regarded, and that, with modesty and discretion, they should be made known to those, on whom the active ordering of such concerns must ultimately depend.—There seems to be no reasonable doubt, that it was the office of the deaconnesses—for such a description of females there certainly was—in the primitive church, to distribute Christian charities, in a discreet and beneficial manner; to visit, instruct, and console the poor, the sick, and the afflicted; to converse in private with all who might seek their counsel on the concerns of their souls, and especially with persons of their own sex, in cases in which a community of sex might invite to an increased freedom of communication. There is no evidence that these deaconnesses were ever formally or officially appointed. Their services seem to have been perfectly voluntary at first, and afterwards, when found to be useful, to have received the encouragement and approbation of the apostles, and other ministers of the church. In all these ways, then, the door of duty is as fully open to the Christian women of this age, as to those in the days of the apostles. And as there are some with us who are willing to enter upon and to perform, to a considerable extent, the services that have been specified, so would to God that their number were increased a hundred-fold.

Here too we must mention those kind and gratifying attentions, and some most substantial services which Christian women may privately render to Missionaries and to the Ministers of Christ in general. Holy women "ministered of their substance" to their Saviour, in the days of his flesh. Our text itself, is but the record of one such illus-

trious instance. And the apostle Paul had been deeply indebted for personal kindnesses and services to another Mary. "Greet Mary (said he) who bestowed much labour on us." The Missionaries of the present day, owe a large part of their comforts, to their Christian sisters. And the settled pastors in nearly all our churches, would, I am confident, be ready to testify, that the kind services and attentions which they and their families receive from the pious women of their several charges, are among the greatest and most grateful alleviations, of the anxious cares, and laborious exertions, of their arduous office—endearing their people to them exceedingly, and rendering them doubly willing to spend and be spent in their service. These things are good and acceptable to God; and in these, let women, who love their Saviour, be careful to abound.

4. Christian women who are engaged in the teaching of children and youth, may express their love to their Saviour, and a commendable zeal in his service, by the instruction of those committed to their care, in the elementary principles of revealed truth; by endeavouring to impress that truth on the hearts and consciences of their tender charge; and by constantly imploring for them in earnest prayer, the special blessing of God their Heavenly Father. That these are duties proper for female teachers, is as clear as that it is right for them to be teachers at all. For no instruction is so important as that which relates to our eternal well being, and which therefore ought never to be omitted, by those to whom the education of youth is committed. The schools of female teachers, moreover, are wholly composed either of youth of their own sex, or of those of the other, who are but little advanced beyond the age of infancy. Blessed be God, the duty here inculcated, has, we have reason to believe, been more frequently and carefully performed of late, than at some former periods. Schools under female instruction, have been opened

and closed with prayer, and in them religious knowledge has been acquired, together with the knowledge of letters, and of other useful and ornamental attainments.

But what shall we say of Sabbath Schools. We say, without reserve, that they appear to be among the happiest devices of Christian ingenuity, in an age of Christian enterprise, for carrying instruction and piety into the families of the poor, the ignorant and the vicious; and of thus extending the blessings of the Gospel to a very large portion of every community, which had before, even in Christian lands, been almost entirely neglected. In the instruction of these schools, pious and benevolent females, without any other earthly reward, than that which they find in doing good, have taken a most active and efficient part. In some regular Christian congregations, as well as in other places, they are the only instructers of these schools; and in every place, so far as my knowledge extends, their exertions have kept full pace with those of their fellow labourers of the other sex, and in certain places, have far outgone them. God has remarkably smiled on those concerned in this blessed work. Numbers of them have been visited with his special grace, and been added to his church on earth—with numbers of those in whose conversion their labours have been instrumental; and doubtless it will be with peculiar delight, that the teachers and the taught will meet and rejoice together, in the church triumphant above. Let every Christian woman be, as far as she can, the patroness and promoter of Sabbath Schools.

5. Christian women may manifest their love to their Saviour, to his cause, and to communion with himself, by associations for prayer among themselves, and by keeping up the worship of God in their households, in the absence of a male head of the family. We have no time for extended argument on the propriety of what is here stated as female duty. We only remark, that it interferes, in no

respect, with what has been shown to be divinely prohibited. The supposition is, that in female prayer meetings, women only meet with women. In the devotional exercises carried on in such circumstances, there is surely no ground for the charge of arrogant assumption, or of any trespass on female decorum. Why then should any object to this sacred communion of sister-hood, in which devout women mingle their prayers and their praises—their prayers for each other, for their husbands, for their children, and for the church of God. Verily we believe that these female offerings come up as sweet incense before the throne of a prayer-hearing God ; and that often in the most signal manner, he returns to the offerers answers of peace.

In the absence of a husband, the wife becomes the head of the family, and ought to maintain family prayer. Let her do it without a form, if she can do it thus, with freedom ; but let her not scruple to use a form, rather than to omit the duty.—Spirit of my sainted mother! If I shall be so happy as to join thee in thy celestial abode, shall I not thank thee there, for the family prayers which, in my early years, and in the absence of a praying father, I heard from thy hallowed lips! Well may I recommend what I know to be practicable—what I know to be profitable.—The obligation to pray with their households is statedly incumbent on widows, unless a pious son or other inmate will assume the service.

Christian women, too, especially if they have prayerless husbands, ought frequently to pray with their children, by themselves apart. That husband must be without feeling, as well as without religion, who would not rather rejoice at this, than regard it with displeasure.

6. Christian women may testify their love to their Saviour, and their desire to extend the benefits of his redemption, by taking part, in a variety of ways, in missionary concerns. "Have we not power (says St. Paul) to

lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas." Here, we believe, is a complete scriptural warrant, for missionaries to be attended by their wives. Some of the apostles—the original and inspired missionaries—were plainly so attended. Nor, when missionaries go forth by families, or companies, is there any transgression of female delicacy or decorum, if unmarried women accompany them. Often they are still under the guardianship of fathers, or brothers, and always under the protection of men of the fairest and purest character. The services of unmarried women may be, as they have often been, of the very highest importance, in missionary operations.

At home, Christian women may, with entire propriety, not only contribute to missionary funds, when founded by others, but form associations of their own, for raising funds, to be appropriated by themselves, to such objects as they may find themselves most disposed to favour. To deny them this privilege, would be to manifest such injustice, as requires no words to expose.

Even Female Missionary Societies have been formed in our country, and conducted with unimpeachable propriety and undeniable utility. While *so* conducted, who will censure them? Who will not rather countenance them, and bid them God speed? By the intervention and aid of ministers of the Gospel, and of pious and discreet laymen, their missionaries may be selected, and missionary services be assigned and inspected, without any trespass on the rights of men, or the delicacy of women.

7. Bible Societies, Tract Societies, Education Societies, Jews Societies, Charity Schools, Orphan Asylums, Widows' Asylums, and all institutions of a similar character to these, present to Christian women objects and opportunities for manifesting their love to their Saviour and his cause, which they may seize and improve, with the great-

est freedom and advantage. And truly they have, in our day, seized and improved them with an activity, and to an extent, which are worthy of the highest praise. In several instances within the knowledge of the speaker, the energy, perseverance, and success, of Christian women, in cultivating these fields of pious usefulness, have reproved the more sluggish efforts of men. It was reserved for the age in which we live, and it is among the indications, as we hope, of a better age approaching, that female agency should be called on, to take part in almost every plan and effort, for extending the Gospel, or for abating the sufferings, or meliorating the condition of mankind. The effect has been wonderful; and it seems scarcely less wonderful, that such efficient aid was never brought into action before.

But among all the benevolent associations that have been mentioned, and to which it seems as if every one who loves either God or man, must cordially wish success, there is not one, that is, in my view, more worthy of the special attention of Christian women—not one that more appropriately belongs to them—than such societies as that whose anniversary we this day celebrate. Consider its object. It is to deliver one half of the human species, in the most populous region of the earth, from a state of the deepest and most complete abjection.—From a state which exhibits them as mere animals; not worthy to be considered as reasonable and immortal beings; not the fit subjects of intellectual improvement, and of religious happiness and hope; not the companions of men, on the footing of intelligence, or of any approximation to equality; but only as his slaves, and the instruments.—But I cannot proceed in the description of their state. It is not of a nature to be described before this audience; nor even to be thought on by one's self, but at the expense of every species of painful and sickening emotions. I solemnly ask then, if there

can be a louder call for humane, for benevolent, for Christian exertion, from every one in whose bosom the feelings of humanity, benevolence, and Christian compassion, are not "twice dead, plucked up by the roots"—than that which is here made, to lend a helping hand, to lift up these millions on millions of the human family, from this state of absolute bestial ignorance, degradation and servility, to a state of rationality, intelligence, happiness, dignity, and the hope of heaven? And if this may be asked of every man, who has the soul of a man, what shall be said to women, to Christian women, in behalf of their own sex, whose feelings they must best know, and in whose wretchedness and sorrows they can best sympathize? Do they occupy themselves in other works of kindness and charity? And can they neglect this? Ought not this to be their peculiar, their favourite object? Ought not the women of the whole civilized world, to make common cause, in rescuing more than one half of their common nature, from the condition of brutes? Ought not all *Christian* women to do this? Yes, they ought—and bear with me, if you cannot think and feel as I do, when I say that I have wondered, and do wonder, that the known condition of women in India, and in other regions where Heathenism and Mahomedanism prevail, has not operated with an electrick force, on the whole enlightened part—and especially on the Christian part—of the sex, to rouse them to the most vigorous action, and to unite them in a concentration of effort, to bring out female nature from this horrible abyss of reproach and infamy; and to raise it to the standing for which it was formed and intended by the Great Author of our being. Heathens and Mahomedans all together, male as well as female, are we know in a state of awful ignorance and wretchedness; but there is a *specialty* in the case of women among them, and it is of this I am now speaking.—Women are debased far below

their lords and masters, who are themselves debased. They are of wretched and degraded tyrants, the more wretched and degraded slaves and drudges, or the mere instruments of their base sensuality. In the *deep* of Heathen and Mahomedan abominations, there is "a lower deep," and there it is, that the whole female sex with them is found. Thanks to God, that those who are trying to bring them relief, have some encouraging indications of success. A considerable number of the poor natives of India, have surrendered their female children for education, to the thrice blessed missionaries; to the heavenly minded men and women who began and are still engaged, in this Godlike work of restoring them to the rights of human nature, and the prospect of eternal felicity. To have made this good beginning, is to have done much. Let but the happy effects of female education be once visible, although it be on a small scale—let but a few well educated females, from among the lower casts in India, go forth into life, and make their superiority to degraded men, as well as to degraded women, to be seen and felt; the certain consequence will be, that the desire of female education will become general and ardent; and the great object in view, will be in a train to be reached, as speedily as the nature of the case will permit. To furnish these specimens of well educated women—and we hope they will be Christian women too—in the various parts of India, will indeed require funds and exertions, a thousand times greater than any of which at present we have the knowledge. But still, the work has been commenced, and is in progress; and we believe it to be God's work, and that, under his smiles and benediction, it will go on and prosper.

Thus, my respected female friends, I have endeavoured to perform, in the best manner I could, the service to which you have called me on this occasion. It is a time

at which, as has been said, women are taking part in almost all that is done in the holy cause of religion and humanity. For this, you suffer unsparing censure, from some of my sex and from some of your own. By this censure, some among you have been intimidated, and others, I question not, have been made honestly to doubt, in what manner they ought to act. Instead, therefore, of confining myself, in this service, to a single point, or of indulging, in general declamation, I have rather chosen to show, as far as my limits and my ability would permit, what Christian women may do, and what they may not do, in expressing their love to the Saviour, and manifesting their desire to promote his religion. The sneer of the infidel we look for, and are prepared to disregard; but *what is Christian duty*, it is, for us, a most serious inquiry. In pursuing this inquiry, I have taken the word of God for my guide—in its letter, where I found its letter explicit, and in its spirit, as far as I could ascertain that spirit, in all that I have said.

As to the special purpose for which your association has been formed, I shall add but little to what you have already heard. It is your high praise, that while too many have been, and still are, negligent of their duty, and as it seems to me, sealed up in apathy and stupor, in regard to the great object of your society, you, like Mary, have done what you could. Go on, Christian sisters. "Be not weary in well doing, for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not." Often think of the number of immortal souls, that are every day and every hour passing into eternity, from the multitudinous population of India—vitious, polluted throughout, and totally ignorant of that Saviour, whose blood alone "cleanseth from all sin." Often think on your special obligations to "God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." Often think on the distinguishing and merciful allotment of his providence,

in giving you birth and education, in a Christian, instead of a heathen, or Mahomedan land. And while you perceive, as you cannot fail to perceive, that women have a peculiar interest in the propagation of revealed truth, since the influence of that alone has ever raised them to their proper rank in society, and sustained them in it, feel that you are under peculiar obligations to extend the knowledge of that truth, by all the means in your power—to extend it for the benefit of all, but especially for the benefit, both temporal and eternal, of your own sex. Never was there greater encouragement to proceed with animation and energy in a good work, than that which you have already received. The cheering intelligence has reached you within the year past, that on the schools of Ceylon, the very schools to which you afford your aid, God has most remarkably poured out his Holy Spirit. Under his sacred influence, those schools have become Bochims and Bethels—places of weeping and houses of prayer; houses in which daughters, as well as sons, have, we trust, been born to God and glory. In this most joyous event, remember that your prayers, and your alms have had a happy instrumentality. Go on, then, to pray earnestly, and to give cheerfully, for God is with you; and before the throne of God and of the Lamb, many of the female children of India, shall yet meet you, and bless you, and rejoice with you through eternal ages.

Men and brethren, who hear me on this occasion. Be reminded that there is a divine injunction laid on us, in relation to the subject which has now been discussed. The apostle Paul, speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, has said—"Help those women that laboured with me in the Gospel." Yes, it is the sacred duty of us all, to help these female gospel labourers; to help them with our countenance and encouragement, with our prayers and our purses, with every aid and every facility which we

can afford them, in their benevolent exertions. For whom do they labour? Not more for themselves than for us. Nay, in many of these pious labours, they are directly helping us; they are taking a part of that burden on themselves, that used to be borne by us alone.—They are doing for us, generously and nobly, a part of our special business. And shall there be a creature in the form of a man, so much without the spirit of a man, as to hinder, and not help them, while thus employed—to mock them with laughter or ridicule, or even to treat them with a cold and discouraging neglect? Such a being, I trust there is not in this assembly. Ah! my brethren, the hour is not far distant, when to have helped the cause of God and Christ, in this dark and perishing world,—to have helped this sacred cause but in a feeble, if it has been an upright manner—will avail us infinitely more, than to have received the proudest distinctions which the world can confer.

And now, hearers of all descriptions, I call on you to help these women, on the present occasion, by a liberal contribution to their funds. But think not that I am going to address you, for this purpose, in the language and tone of a mendicant. I read no such address, no such language, in my Bible. Paul indeed sometimes appealed earnestly to the liberality of the primitive churches, and sometimes warmly commended them for it. But he never presented himself before them in the character and style of a beggar. No. But he directed Timothy to "charge them that are rich in this world—to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." And a greater than Paul commended the two mites of a poor widow cast into the treasury of the Lord, beyond all the offerings of the rich. —Therefore, men and brethren, it is in the name of the Lord, unworthy as I am, that I come to you; and I deliver to you his *charge*, and not my own, that, for his sake, and for your own sakes, you help these women who labour

in the gospel. I tell you in his name, that the day is coming that will call you to account before Him, as the judge of quick and dead, for the manner in which you shall have disposed of all your property—the day when what you shall now give, if you give it from right motives, will afford you more pleasure, than all that you ever spent in luxury, and show, and superfluous formal gratification. Give then from a pure, a noble, a truly benevolent desire to do good. Give thus, I repeat it, for your own sakes, and for the sake of your Saviour's precious cause, and as you will wish to have done, when he shall say to those on his right hand—O ! may you and I be there—"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger and ye took me in : Naked and ye clothed me : I was sick and ye visited me : I was in prison and ye came unto me—Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me—Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."—Amen.

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